Network Working Group
Request for Comments #273
NIC 7837
Categories:
Related: 7625, 7626, 7661, 7688, 7650, 7646
Obsoletes: 7662

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MORE ON STANDARD HOST NAMES

The Network Information Center is a logical place to handle this problem of Standard Host Names and so the ball now rests here. This is clearly a delicate subject with people having strong feelings and attachments to names. No past proposal, including RFC 247, NIC 7608, has yet achieved any acceptance. This identification seems a natural thing and should be taken into account in setting up a naming scheme. Therefore, the following proposal is offered which I hope may be satisfactory to everyone.

Any naming scheme must:

(1) Recognize the expanding character of the Network, with the potential eventually of several hundred sites.

(2) Recognize the need for abbreviations to simplify typing.

(3) Recognize the use of names on hardcopy and online documentation.

(4) Recognize people's strong identification with historical names associated with their project.

To meet these needs, we propose adoption of a hybrid scheme related to those in the other past proposals.

Each host will have a formal name of the form:

<Institution Mnemonic> "-" <Host or NIC Station Mnemonic>

and an optional nickname of the form:

<Nickname>

We have heard no arguments to support severe restrictions on name length and, therefore, human considerations should probably prevail, but would suggest the following guidelines. 7

<Institution Mnemonic> will be at most 4 characters, formed as per RFC 247, NIC 7688,). 7a

Examples of Institutions being: AMES, CASE, BBN, UCLA, SRI, MIT, HARV, MITR, etc. 7a1

We must recognize that in the future there may be multiple IMPS and TIPS and combinations at a given institution, so that there is not a one-to-one correspondence between <Institution Mnemonic> and IMPS or TIPS. Also affiliated with the Network, there will be groups and individuals without an IMP or a TIP, or with just a terminal to a TIP, whose organizations need unique names. 7a2

<Host or NIC Station Mnemonic> will not have any restriction on length, but should if possible be short. In picking <Host or NIC Station Mnemonic>, an order of priority for choosing this mnemonic might be 7b

(1) Suborganization within the <Institution Mnemonic>. 7b1

(2) Project mnemonic. 7b2

(3) Machine designation. 7b3

(4) The suggestion in RFC 247, NIC 7686 to include the designation TIP or TEST should probably be followed as conveying useful information. 7b4

Examples might be: 7b5

ARC, NMC, NCCTIP, TENEXA, TENEXB, MULTICS, ILLIAC, SAIL, DMCG, IMP, TX2, etc. 7b5a

The <nickname> should be unique within the network community, short, and preferably should be the same as <Host or NIC Station Mnemonic> to make life easy for people having to learn them. 7c

I would strongly recommend that Telnets recognize both the Formal Name and the Nickname. 8

Now the sticky question: who chooses the names? The only satisfactory answer is to allow the hosts, through their liaison, to choose their own names, possibly subject to some discussion if duplicate or extra long names are picked. Hosts or stations at a given institution should use the same <Institution Mnemonic>. 9

Let's settle this issue as soon as possible, say by November 5; each liaison, please send me your names by then. 10

If there are any implementation hardship cases, other than TIPs, caused by the above scheme, please let me know as soon as possible. 11